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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a new student orientation program at the University of Puget Sound (Washington) that involves an outdoor adventure program. New students entering the University embark on a 3-day outdoor adventure program called "Passages," as part of their orientation experience during the week prior to the beginning of the fall semester. The class of approximately 700 students is divided in half. While one group is on Passages, the other group remains on campus engaged in academic advising, registration and a 2-day seminar on writing, reading, and critical thinking called "Prelude." At the mid-point the groups switch. Goals for Passages focus on community building, providing transition from high school to college, and orienting students to the Pacific Northwest outdoor environment. Students can choose between a small group backpacking trip or a base camp experience. Passages leaders are current University of Puget Sound students who receive extensive leadership training over a 3-month period. Students in the program show decreases in a number of psychological symptoms. Participating students show increases in personal, academic, and total self-efficacy from pretest to posttest. This paper contains extensive appendices: (1) Appendix A contains a Passages 3-day schedule; (2) Appendix B provides suggestions for group discussions to be used by group leaders; (3) Appendix C is a backpacking leader pre-training questionnaire used to determine training needs; and (4) Appendix D lists backpacking leader competencies. (KS)

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A WILDERNESS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION PROGRAM

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Program Description

Since 1985, new students entering the University of Puget Sound have embarked on a three-day outdoor adventure program called "Passages" as part of their orientation experience, the week prior to the beginning of Fall semester. Approximately 90 percent of the 700 new students entering the university each Fall participate. The class is divided in half. While one group is on Passages for three days, the other group remains on campus, engaged in academic advising, registration and a two-day seminar on writing, reading and critical thinking called "Prelude." At the mid-point the groups switch.

Goals for Passages focus on community building between new students and returning students (60 of whom serve as Passages leaders), faculty and staff; providing a transition from high school to college; and orienting students to the Pacific Northwest outdoor environment.

In late Spring new students are sent information about the orientation program and asked to choose between two Passages experiences--a small group backpacking trip in the Olympic mountains, or a base camp experience at a large boy scout camp the university rents in the Olympic foothills, on Puget Sound. Typically, about 30 percent of Passages participants choose a beginning, moderate or advanced backpacking trip. These groups of 10 new students and two trained student leaders engage in group discussions about personal goals and college expectations during their three days and two nights on the trail. Those choosing the base camp experience participate in dayhikes, canoeing, sailing and rowboating; attend informal workshops conducted by student Passages leaders, faculty and staff on topics ranging from meditation to goal setting; and meet daily with eight to ten of their classmates for discussion and team building in "home base groups" (see Appendix A)

The backpackers come off the trail and join with new students at the base camp for a final evening dinner and campfire program emphasizing the togetherness of the University of Puget Sound community. Students are invited to make connections between their Passages experience and the academic venture upon which they are about to embark.

Leadership

Recruitment for Passages leaders begins in early February, with up to 100 applicants for the 50 or 60 student leader positions available each year. About half of the leaders selected are returning from previous years. All leaders are paid a small stipend.

During the next three months, leadership training sessions cover hard skills, soft skills and program procedures. Topics include the goals of the program, how to lead group discussions (see Appendix B), promotion of diversity, conservation and environmental ethics, first aid and CPR. This phase of training also includes an overnight field trip to the base camp with the student leaders who will facilitate the Prelude portion of new student orientation. Although these two components of orientation will occur separately, they are complimentary to each other and require some common leadership skills and perspectives. A good deal of community building occurs among leaders, partly to develop an *espirit de corps* among this group and to model what they will need to do with new students on Passages, as well as Prelude.

Additional backcountry skills are required of students who will serve as backpacking leaders. They also receive supplementary training. These students first complete a pre-training questionnaire (see Appendix C), then are introduced to a backpacker leader competencies list (see Appendix D). This provides the

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Passages directors with self-assesments from backpacking leaders and provides these leaders with a clear description of the skills they need to have in order to safely and successfully lead a group of students through the wilderness. Training culminates with a weekend backpacking trip in the Olympic mountains. Leader trainees are invited throughout the training process to provide input about their training needs.

Outcomes

Passages seems to impact new students in a variety of ways. The backpackers, having functioned self-suficiently for three days, typically return as a tightknit, enthusiastic group. One backpacker said he learned that "I could hike 14 miles in the wilderness with ten people I had never met, and get to know and appreciate each one's individuality. I now have special memories of meeting new friends at UPS (University of Puget Sound), memories that are building blocks for a new beginning."

In the basecamp, interacting with up to 300 other new students, student leaders, faculty and staff gives new students a breadth of experiences; friendships form and a sense of community develops. One base camp participant summarized the experience of many in stating, "the Passages program really made a difference in the way I accepted UPS. I met people that I wouldn't have gotten a chance to meet on campus, and they are still my close friends. The outdoors has the ability to bring people closer on a one-to-one level."

A study by Graff (1990) on the backpacking segment of the Passages program showed that these students, as well as students in the "Prelude" or writing component of the University's orientation program, showed decreases in a number of psychological symptoms--obsessive compulsive, anxiety, interpersonal sensitivity, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. In addition, the backpack group had a bigger decrease, in comparison to the writing group, in global symptom scores and depression. This study concluded, "although the two groups did not differ significantly in the degree of improvement in self-efficacy both of them did show increases in personal, academic and total self-efficacy from pretest to the post-test (p. 42)."

Passages also appears to have a significant impact on the 50 to 60 student leaders. These sophomores, juniors and seniors are given a great deal of responsibility for the direction, implementation and success of the program. On leader evaluations, one person wrote, "I'm a senior and a half and there are still transitions, still new thresholds to cross, endings to close, beginnings to prepare for. Passages will never just be the orientation to the Northwest and UPS; the skills I've learned from [the directors] and the other leaders continue to be useful each day, each year, at every chapter."

Reference

Graff, K. *The effect of outdoor adventure programming on self-efficacy and psychological symptoms.* Unpublished Masters thesis, Central Washington University, 1990.

Appendix A

Passages Schedule

Day 1

Time	Activity
9:00 AM	Backpackers arrive at Base Camp. Welcoming. Pack food and equipment. Leave for trailhead.
3:00 PM	Base Campers arrive. Welcoming: Words about Passages concept, metaphor for going through college
	Form Home Base groups: Camp tours; pick up rental equipment; meet and make group choice about Monday AM activity
6:00	Dinner
7:00	Leader's meeting.
8:00	Home base group meetings.
9:30	Campfire program: Introductions; storytelling traditions of the Northwest

Day 2

Early	Home Base Group sunrise trips to Mt. Walker.
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
8:45	Home base group activity, *or* a New Games, films, crafts activities
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Swimming, boating, sailing, sunbathing, volleyball (until 5:00 PM).
4:00	Workshops (optional)
6:00	Dinner
7:00	Leader's meeting
	Students: Discussions with trustees, alumni.
8:00	Home base group meetings
9:00 - 11:00	Hoedown.
	Values films and discussions

Day 3

Early	Home Base Group sunrise trips to Mt. Walker.
7:30 - 8:30	Breakfast
8:45	Home Base Group meetings
9:30	Dayhikes, canoe trips leave
9:30 - 11:45	Workshops.
12:00	Lunch
1:00	Swimming, boating, sailing, sunbathing, volleyball. Intramurals.
	Backpackers arrive in base camp; clean selves and equipment
5:30	Outdoor picnic: Home Base Group and Backpack group pairs
6:30	Home base group/backpacker group meetings continue
8:00	Campfire program: sharing by freshmen; Bob and Jim reflections and conclusions
9:00	Leave on busses.

Appendix B

Passages
Group Discussion Suggestions

The small group is, perhaps, the heart of the Passages program. In Base Camp, this is the Home Base Group; on the trail, the dayhike or backpacking group. Discussions and activities which leaders facilitate in their groups can have an enormous impact on what students take with them from Passages.

The following suggestions are for you to pick and choose from to use with your backpacking or Home Base group. Consider these as tools in your toolbox; use what is most appropriate for your group. These suggestions supplement the *General Guidelines for Working with Groups* and the *Group Ground Rules*.

It is very possible, and sometimes desirable, that rather than use these suggestions, your group discussions will be largely group led--people will almost spontaneously begin talking about topics that are heavy, deep and real. Your job as a leader, then, is to do less leading and more participating.

Keep in mind that one of the purposes of Passages is to help new students form a sense of belonging in the University community. Discussions can be most effective when you try to include opportunities for linkages from Passages to other areas of life--back on campus, with friends and family, etc.

Openings for Getting Acquainted,Trust and Team Building

Backward Name
Each person takes her/his first name, spells it backwards, introduces self with new name in a creative manner (i.e. using movement). Group should guess "forward" name.

Objects of Nature
Each person goes off to find a natural object (stone, leaf, twig, etc.) they are most able to identify with. Come back into the circle, introduce self (name) and describe why you identify with your natural object.

Hopes and Expectations for Passages
Ask your group to respond to: "What has to happen during Passages (at base camp or on our backpacking trip) for you to consider it a success? When it's over, what will have occurred?" Include in this discussion (perhaps after everyone has had a chance to respond to the first part) some sharing about what the group or individuals in the group can do to help each person have the successful Passages experience they described.

Commitment Bands
Each person gets a piece of yarn or leather thong to tie around their wrist; this is a symbol for something they want to get out of Passages. Suggest that people think about how to use Passages to help them in their first semester in college., or think about a new behavior they want to try out at Passages (i.e. initiating a conversation with five new people for the purpose of developing friendships) Then, each person makes a statement about her/his goals or commitment (possibly preceded by writing this in individual journals). Finally, focus the discussion on how the group, or specific individuals in the group, might help or support each other in achieving their goals at Passages and beyond. Also discuss commonalities that may have emerged.

Blind Line
Have group members put their sleeping bags over their heads. Give each person a number (i.e. 1 - 10) secretly and have them line up in order nonverbaly; *or* have them verbally line up in order of birth date.

Personal Storytelling
Each person shares his/her most challenging (or worst) outdoor/wilderness experience, then shares his/her best outdoor/wilderness experience with the group. Each comes up with a symbol for best experience, then shares this symbol with or gives this symbol to the group. This can be done in three rounds: all share worst experience, all share best experience, then all give symbol to group. Or, each person can discuss all three, then move on. The first format would more likely end the group on a positive note.

Trust Fall
Have the group do a trust fall; one person falls backward into the arms of others. This can be done on the ground; if you want to do this with some elevation--from a stump or rock--**make sure you have participated in our trust fall leader training first.** Some incorrect and dangerous trust fall techniques have been adopted.

Metaphor: Giving and receiving support; doing risky things at school/in life is easier when you have support.

Trust Walk
In dyads, one person is blindfolded, or keeps eyes closed (the existential blindfold) while the other leads the "blind" person on a walk (around camp, on the trail, on the beach). Blind person can remain silent, or both can be silent, with guide maintaining physical contact.

Metaphor: Similar to trust fall, above.

Dyad Introductions
Have group break up into pairs with someone they know least well. One person talks about her/himself (i.e. interests,family, dreams, why they came to UPS), while the other person just listens for 4 or 5 minutes. Switch roles, then back in the group have each person introduce his/her partner to the group. (This fosters listening skills) As a group, talk about how it felt having someone talk about you.

Purposes and Personal Goals
Initiate a brief discussion about the purposes of Passages. Discuss how this can be a rare opportunity to experiment with different behaviors. Statements such as "no one knows you here," "you can be whoever you want," "try some things differently here," can help to set an open and free atmosphere.

Ask people to think about, maybe write in their journal, then state, what they want to get out of Passages. *What is one thing you would like to leave here with that you now don't have?* Or, *think about a new behavior you want to try out here.* (See "Taking a Risk") Have each person make a statement about his/her goal or commitment for Passages. Finally, focus the discussion on how the group, or individuals in the group, might help each other achieve their goals at Passages and beyond; also, commonalities that may have emerged.

Transition (Passage) into College

Hopes, Fears and Expectations
Have a discussion about peoples' hopes, fears and expectations about college. Leader should share her/his own hopes, fears and expectations. Discuss what each person would consider most helpful to realize hopes and to ease fears.

Burning Something You Want to Leave Behind
All write on a slip of paper something they want to leave behind (an attitude, habit, behavior, memory, etc.). The scraps are then burned in a campfire or candle. Then, discuss the "clean slate" that all can have when they take their "passage" into this new environment. You can be a new person; no one knows your history; etc. Have the group share their feelings about this process, but leave it optional about sharing what they burned.

Taking a Risk

After your group has become somewhat acquainted with each other (perhaps by the second day), initiate a discussion about risk taking. A risk is something we voluntarily do that is outside of our comfort zone and/or has an unknown outcome. With risk taking, however, can come growth and a sense of competence in new areas. Point out that often the most difficult risks are not physical, but personal or emotional. Some people may feel a risk about entering college (keeping up academically, making friends, etc.). Ask people to share a risk they've taken--physical, personal or emotional--and what the outcome was of that risk. Ask group members to discuss how they felt after taking that risk, pointing out that even if this did not turn out as hoped, the individual can still feel positive about themself for having taken the risk.

Ask each person to think of, and then state to the group, a risk they could take during Passages. For example, (1) initiate a conversation with at least 3 new people; (2) find a person you would ordinarily be *least likely* to want to get to know and get to know that person; (3) let someone in this group know how you feel; (4) on a dayhike or backpacking trip, take on the responsibility for guiding the group to its destination, using the map. It is important that the risk identified is outside of the individual's comfort zone and normal behavior patterns. Do not, however, allow dangerous physical risks (like jumping off the pier at low tide blind folded.

Tell the group that they are to report on their risk taking at your next or following day group meeting.

At the meeting when group members are reporting about the risks they've taken, help people identify and acknowledge each other for their efforts. What went well? What would they adjust next time? Ask how they felt in anticipation of, during and following their risk taking. If someone did not follow through on a risk they said they would try, don't blame or judge, but ask what would help (or what kind of support from the group could help) them take that risk. Conclude this discussion by asking people to talk about what they've learned about themselves or others and how this and risk taking skills can be useful during their first year at UPS.

Discussion and Group Cohesion

Discussion Starters

This is a process for group members to share experiences rather than opinions. The leader introduces a phrase from the list below; everyone in the group is asked to complete the phrase with descriptions from childhood and/or present experiences. You, as group leader, should provide a balance between directive and democratic leadership; this means that sometimes you may need to redirect the group toward personal feelings and experiences if the conversation shifts to intellectualizing. You might point out that when a group exchanges personally meaningful experiences, people tend to feel more relaxed with and supportive of each other.

The group should be seated in a circle, close together. You can proceed in one of three ways:

- Read selected phrases. Each person in the group responds. Encourage other group members to really give the person responding their full attention; that is, actively listen.
- Select 3 or more phrases; ask group members to write these down as you state them. Have group members pair up to interview each other on these subjects. After about 20 minutes, have the group reconvene, with each person reporting what her/his partner said.
- Have people count off by 2's. Form 2 circles, each facing the other, one inside the other. State a phrase. Each person of the pair facing each other completes the sentence to their partner. One of the circles moves, so each topic gets different people together.

Phrases:

1. The best measure of personal success is . . .
2. People think of me as . . .
3. The greatest value that guides my life is . . .
4. When I have free time I . . .
5. People who run things should be . . .
6. I miss . . .

7. I'm looking forward to . . .
8. What I'm most worried about is . . .
9. As a child I . . .
10. The best book I ever read . . .
11. My family . . .
12. One word to best describe my life up to this moment is . . .
13. If I could travel to one place in the world, I would go . . .
14. The thing I like about myself is . . .
15. I would like to be . . .
16. The person who has most influenced my life is . . .
17. A talent I want to develop is . . .
18. I feel most lonely when . . .
19. I feel most alive when . . .
20. Ten years from now, I . . .
21. I go into the wilderness because . . .
22. What I learn from the wilderness is . . .
23. The three most significant things that have happened in my life are . . .
24. If money were no problem, the one thing I would most like to do is . . .
25. Today I learned . . .
26. I usually avoid . . .
27. My favorite place is . . .
28. My friends are . . .
29. Most people don't know that I . . .
30. Today I really appreciated . . .
31. I felt close to others when . . .
32. *[Ask group to create their own question(s)]*

At the end of this exercise, discuss (1) which topics were easiest/hardest to talk about; (2) ways in which group members may now see others in the group differently; (3) if there are any different feelings now about the group (i.e. greater closeness).

The phrases above can be used at various times of a group's time together. Choose those that seem most relevant to your group and to what is happening.

Appreciations

Each person shares something positive about the person to her/his right or left, and then continue to go around that way. A good way to end a group session.

Bombardment

Ask for a volunteer, or select a person that had a hard day (on the trail, etc.). Everyone else in the group shares an appreciation with this one person, who should be encouraged to just listen and accept compliments, not sabotage them. Discuss how it felt for the person to receive these compliments; how it felt for others to give compliments. Over the course of the backpacking trip or home base group, try to bombard every student at least once.

Gift of Happiness

Ask group members to remove a couple of blank pages from their journal. Tear these into small pieces (at least 3 x 3 inches), with the number of pieces equal to the number of people in the group. Write a person's name, including one's own, on one side of each piece of paper.

Ask the group to write a short message to each person expressing something positive, that you like or appreciate about that person. This could be something the person said or did, a strength you observe, why you are glad to be in the group with her/him, etc. Be specific. On the paper with your own name on it, write something that you are proud of about yourself (that has occurred since you arrived at UPS, if possible). Ask people to sign their messages if they want, but they have the option of leaving them

unsigned. Fold the messages once and distribute to appropriate members.
Discuss: feelings experienced; feedback that was most meaningful.

Group Massage
This is a great relaxer, or at the end of a day on the trail. There are two ways to do the group massage:

(1) Have your group sit down and form an inner and an outer circle, each facing inward and having an equal number of people. People on the inner circle close their eyes and remain seated. People on the outer circle stand up and silently begin to walk clockwise (or counterclockwise) around the inner circle. Then, stop behind a person on the inner circle, reach down, and begin to give that person a neck, shoulder and back massage. After a couple of minutes, the outer circle stands up, again silently walks around the inner circle, stops behind another person, and gives that person a massage. Do this 3 or 4 times, then have the outer circle walk a bit more, stop, have the inner circle people open their eyes. Now, outer and inner circle people switch, and proceed as above.

(2) Have your group sit down in a close circle with everyone facing clockwise (or counterclockwise). With eyes closed, silently massage the back, shoulders and neck of the person in front of you. Then, turn around and face the other direction in the circle and massage the back of the person who was previously massaging you.

As a group, share your experience of massaging and being massaged. How did the massages differ, and how well could you communicate with each other?

Forced Choice
Make two parallel lines in the dirt, or on the trail about 18 feet apart. Ask group members to decide on one choice or the other and stand behind the respective line. Ask them, "would you rather be . . ."

hammer or nail	pitcher or batter
loved or loved one	chair or table
spender or saver	forest or ocean
helper or helpee	[create your own choices]

Discuss: *What were your feelings? Which choices were easiest/hardest? What do your choices say about you? Did any patterns emerge in your choices?*

Line Continuum
Make a line on the ground, marking the midpoint. People should line up in a straight line by rating themselves on this continuous line for the characteristics of:

leader - follower	optimist - pessimist
aggressive - passive	listener - talker
giver - taker	sensitive - cold
doer - thinker	[create your own combinations]

Once people are in a rank ordered straight line for each combination, ask if people disagree with the order. If so, have them put people in the spot they feel they belong. Anyone who wants can change the order. This allows people to rate themselves and see how others perceive them.

Discuss: *How did you feel about the spot you put yourself at? Were you comfortable or uncomfortable? What were some of your reasons for putting yourself where you did? How did you feel when someone moved you?*

Guided Fantasies / Imagery

Wall Fantasy
Tell the group you are going to take them on a guided fantasy and at a certain point they are to complete it

themselves. Have everyone get in a comfortable spot, close their eyes and relax. Use many details, and go slowly so that people can absorb the images. Here is an example of a scenario you might use: "Imagine yourself in a big field. It is very open and it's warm outside. How does the sun feel on your shoulders? Feel the grass on your legs. There are some flowers; what colors do you see? On your right is a footpath. You walk over to it and follow it. You walk up a rise, and in front of you, you see a wall. Walk up to this wall and complete the fantasy on your own from here. Don't censor, but let whatever comes into your mind come."

After a few minutes say, "Begin now to finish your fantasy. In a moment I'm going to ask you to open your eyes and come back here. . . Now open your eyes." Explain that the wall can symbolize a block, challenge, risk or problem. Individuals created their own wall, the size and what it was made of. Some will have huge walls and some will be small. Some people will make it over easily, some may simply go around their wall, while others may not even try. Explain how we often put up our own blocks and create our own difficulties.

Allow people to share anything they want about their experience, including what was on the other side of their wall, how this relates to their lives, etc.

Group Projects

Group Journal
Come up with a group name, design, logo or slogan (as a group) to put on the cover of the group journal. Any group member can write impressions, meaningful or funny things said in the group, etc. At meetings, trail breaks or at mealtimes, a group member may read from the journal.

Group Poem
On a piece of paper, one person writes the first two lines of a poem, then folds the paper down so that only the second line is visible, and passes it to the next person, who writes two more lines, and so on. After the last person writes her/his two lines, read, or have a group member read, the entire poem to the group.

Individual Journals
Suggest that after a day on the trail, a day at the base camp, or after a home base group meeting, people jot down a few notes in their journals. Some ideas? *What were your feelings today/during the activity? What were some of the statements you were telling yourself? Were you uncomfortable about anything? If so, what? Were any of your reactions/behaviors today typical of you? If so, what?*

Conclusions

Backpacking / Home Base Group Union
Before dinner on Day 3, a Backpacking group and a Home Base Group agree to have dinner and their concluding meeting together. Use this time to become acquainted with one another and share the story of your group--what you've done, what you've learned, what Passages has meant to you, etc. As a combined group, you may also choose to do one or more of the additional activities described below.

Crossing Thresholds
Ask people to spend five to ten minutes writing in their journals, describing briefly the experience of crossing a threshold or taking a "trip" (maybe without even leaving town), in which the journey was more important than the destination. Ask them to list several important elements of that "trip".

Then reconvene as a group and have people form dyads to share discussion about their "trips." After people have talked for a few minutes ask the dyads to consider the following questions:

- How many found their "trips" meaningful because they were required to see something familiar, (themselves, their families or friends) in a new way?

- What common themes do you find in your two different experiences? companions which accompany you? fears encountered? risks taken? successes experienced?

Reconvene as a group to discuss the experience of crossing a threshold by exploring the way in which the journey is more important than the destination:

1. How do you feel now about Passages, crossing a threshold to college, compared to how you felt when you first arrived at Passages?
2. How have the expectations or goals you first stated been achieved or not achieved? What do you need to do from here to continue to work on them?
3. How can you use what you have learned at Passages in other aspects of your life at Puget Sound? in the classroom? in building relationships with others? in understanding yourself?
4. What might prevent you from using this new learning?
5. What will you need from others to help you achieve your goals? Are there some tests or negative elements you expect to encounter?
6. What have you learned about yourself so far in your Passages experience of threshold crossing?
7. What have you learned from each person in the group?

Conclude by having people complete either of the two exercises which follow -- Symbolic Anchor or Letter to Self.

Symbolic Anchor

Ask your group members to visualize a symbol or "anchor" they can use after Passages to remind them of something they learned here or received from the group. They may find a small natural object, have a favorite quotation, or draw a picture or write something in their journal. Ask participants to share their symbol or anchor and describe what it means.

Letter to Self

Hand out paper and envelopes. Ask participants to write their name and campus address on the envelope. Then write a letter to self, which will be mailed out later in the Fall semester. Suggest that they include learnings and impressions from Passages, risks taken, goals, anticipations and expectations about college, advice to themselves, etc.

[Collect these and turn them in to the Program Office; we will mail them out around mid-semester.]

Rear View Mirror

Ask your group to imagine themselves leaving Passages shortly, and as they are doing so, looking in a symbolic rear view mirror back to their experience here. Ask them to reflect for a moment about their experiences with others in this group--what others said or did, etc.--and about anything they may have wanted to say, to the group as a whole or to individuals, that they have not yet said. (You may want to ask people to close their eyes as they are reflecting about this). Now, ask if anyone wants to say any final words.

Reunion

Have the group make a commitment to get together by the second week of classes, to talk about how things are going, eat ice cream, etc. You may want to pass around a name/address/phone list to be photocopied and, in a few days, sent to your group members, as a means for them to conveniently be in contact.

Appendix C

Passages

Backpacking Leader Pre-Training Questionnaire

Name

To help us to best design leader training to meet your needs, please complete the following question-naire and return it to SUB 216 **by April 12, 1991.**

Please rate your skills and experience with these areas using the following scale:

1 = No experience
2 = Some experience or training as a participant; posess basic skills in ths area
3 = Advanced skills; feel comfortable doing this
4 = Experience leading or teaching others in this area

_____Backpacking stoves: basic operation; care and cleaning
Stove(s) used:
_____Tents and tarps: proper site selection, basic set-up, use in adverse conditions
_____Backpacks: correct loading and weight distribution; able to perform adjustment and fitting on a variety of packs
_____Clothing: knowledgeable about proper backcountry clothing, layering and how to stay warm and dry
_____Navigation: knowledgeable about map terminology and symbols; can orient map and compass to terrain, compensating for magnetic declination; able to read topo lines and use a compass
_____Food and cooking: knowledgeable about backcountry nutrition needs and menu planning; competent at cooking a meal
_____Minimum impact hiking and camping: i.e. proper disposal of waste, setting up camp to have little or no impact on water sources and terrain
_____Hiking in the backcountry
_____Fire building
_____Stream crossings
_____Knots
_____Water purification
_____First Aid: familiar with backcountry applications Certification(s):
_____Safety management: Knowledgeable about principal factors leading to emergency situations and techniques for avoiding emergencies; able to plan and implement backcountry evacuations.
_____Weather: able to read observable signs of weather change
_____Group management: knowledge of stages of group formation, motivation and behavior modification techniques
_____Group discussion: facilitating effective group discussions (i.e. being non-judgemental, asking open-ended questions); able to debrief program activities, facilitate transfer of learning, and create metaphors
_____Team building: familiar with "New Games" or other initiatives
_____Teaching: knowledge of learning styles, tone setting, sequencing of learning
_____Judgement and decision making: able to make proper judgements and decisions about backcountry or group issues when necessary

Please use this space to add comments or further explanations:
Please describe any formal backpacking or outdoor leadership training you've had (i.e. NOLS or Outward Bound courses)
Describe your backpacking experience (length of trips, places, etc.)
What do you want to gain from this training weekend?

Appendix D

Passages
Backpacking Leader Competencies

Name

Our goal for you as a Passages backpacking leader is to be comfortable and competent in the variety of skills required to lead a group of students on a trip that will be safe and from which they will learn about the wilderness and successfully make the transition into the University community. In short, we want you to be successful at what you do.

This list of competencies is presented so that you know clearly what you need to know. Although many of the skills are taught during leader training (including the backpacking leader training trip), some skills you may need to gain on your own. Where applicable, approximate training dates are listed for when we expect skills to first be presented. You may already be fairly competent in some areas. That's great; we encourage you to assist others in their learning.

Use this competencies list to keep track of what you are learning. We see assessment as an on-going learning process, not a final exam. When you think your skill in a particular area matches the description given, ask an "assessor" (a Passages leader trainer, Bob or Jim) to observe you demonstrate that skill. This demonstration may be part of a group training activity in which you participate or may occur gradually over a longer period of time. Someone somewhere said that "failure is the springboard to success," so if your first try shows a need for greater mastery in a particular area, go back and learn what you need to learn, then ask for another assessment. People learn different things at different times. Our main expectation is that you are assessed at the "competent" level in all or almost all areas by the time Passages actually begins.

In the "Assessment" section under each skill area, or competency, have your assessor observe your demonstration of that area, then circle one of these assessment ratings:

1 = Not yet ready in this area.
2 = Somewhat ready; you've partially got it, but still need some further mastery. The "comments" section can be used to specify what you still need to learn.
3 = Competent in this area; you've demonstrated the skill at the level described.

Assessment: Date 1 2 3 Assessor
Comments:

Date 1 2 3 Assessor
Comments:

Date 1 2 3 Assessor
Comments:

Equipment

1. Preparation: Shows up for training trip with proper equipment and clothing, as specified on *Equipment and Clothing List.*

2. Equipment check: Able to conduct equipment and clothing check of others, answer equipment questions, etc.

3. Stoves: Demonstrates proper care, refueling and operation of backpacking stoves. Maintains a "gas station" at least 50 feet away and downhill from stoves. Able to keep a stove lit throughout a meal.

4. Tents: Demonstrates proper set-up, site placement, take-down and packing of tents.

5. Backpacks: Loads backpack correctly, with weight properly distributed. Able to perform adjustments and fitting on a variety of internal and external frame backpacks.

Backcountry Skills

1. Map and compass: Can locate self and surrounding land features on a topographic map; can describe elevation changes for proposed route; can orient map and compass to terrain, compen-sating for magnetic declination; can take and follow compass bearings.

2. Water purification: Properly purifies drinking water, using PotableAqua, boiling or filters.

3. Cooking: Properly plans and prepares a cooked meal.

Environmental Care

1. Trails: Hikes on trail; does not cut switchbacks. Demonstrates proper meadow hiking techniques.

2. Campsite selection: Selects campsite 200 feet away from streams or water sources, with proper drainage and adequate room for group.

3. Minimum impact of campsite: Uses established trails through campsite; maintains a neat and litter-free campsite at all times.

4. Fires, stoves and cooking: Uses existing fire ring or does not build a fire; gathers only already downed firewood; sets up kitchen away from sleeping areas.

Sanitation

1. Human waste: Digs 6 to 8 inch cat hole at least 200 feet away from camp and water sources. Burns or burries toilet paper, depending on current National Park regulations.

2. Food and clean-up: Carries out/does not bury food leftovers. Cleans cooking equipment with hot water (no soap) 200 feet away from water sources. Properly hangs all food at night and when out of camp.

Safety and Risk Management

1. Van driving *(for designated van drivers):* Obeys speed limits; uses and instructs passengers to use seat belts; drives in right lane on multi-lane highways, except when passing; exercises extra care on dirt roads; pays attention to driving; generally safe; etc.

2. Backcountry: Does not place self or others into potentially hazardous situations; demonstrates safe group management (i.e. staying together, heat and cold awareness); can read observable signs of weather changes.

3. Medical: Has current first aid and CPR certification; demonstrates knowledge of first aid kits; able to evaluate the general physical and psychological condition of participants and adjust trip demands accordingly.

4. Emergencies: Demonstrates knowledge of principal factors leading to emergency situations and

techniques for avoiding them. Knowledgeable about how to plan and implement backcountry evacuations. Knowledgeable about Passages emergency procedures.

5. Fitness: Meets backpacking demands for fitness and endurance.

Group Facilitation and Leadership

1. Trailhead briefing: Conducts discussion at beginning of trip covering illness and injury prevention (i.e. blisters, heat exhaustion, hypothermia), physical disclaimers, route overview, full value contract, etc.

2. Interpersonal: Able to offer and accept feedback; exhibit cooperation, teamwork, compromise.

3. Group discussion: Able to facilitate group discussions by being non-judgemental, using open ended questions and effective listening techniques. Able to debrief program activities and facilitate transfer of learning throughout program activities.

4. Team building: Knowledgeable of and able to facilitate group team building and trust building initiatives

5. Teaching skills: Able to teach backcountry, environmental, safety and other topics to others using demonstrations, discussions, mini-lectures and experiential methods.

6. Perceptive and responsive: To individual needs, personalities, limitations, potentials, capacities for responsibility, etc.

7. Judgement and decision making: Demonstrates proper and safe judgement. Able to strike a balance between involving group in decision making and taking charge of a situation herself/himself.

Other Comments

Use this space to describe other specific strengths and areas for improvement: